









Los Angeles County Trail Assessment Community Meeting July 12, 2012



Introductions

County

 Lorrie Bradley, Park Planner – Trails and Planning, LA County Parks and Recreation Department contact information: lbradley@parks.lacounty.gov 213-738-2812

Consultants

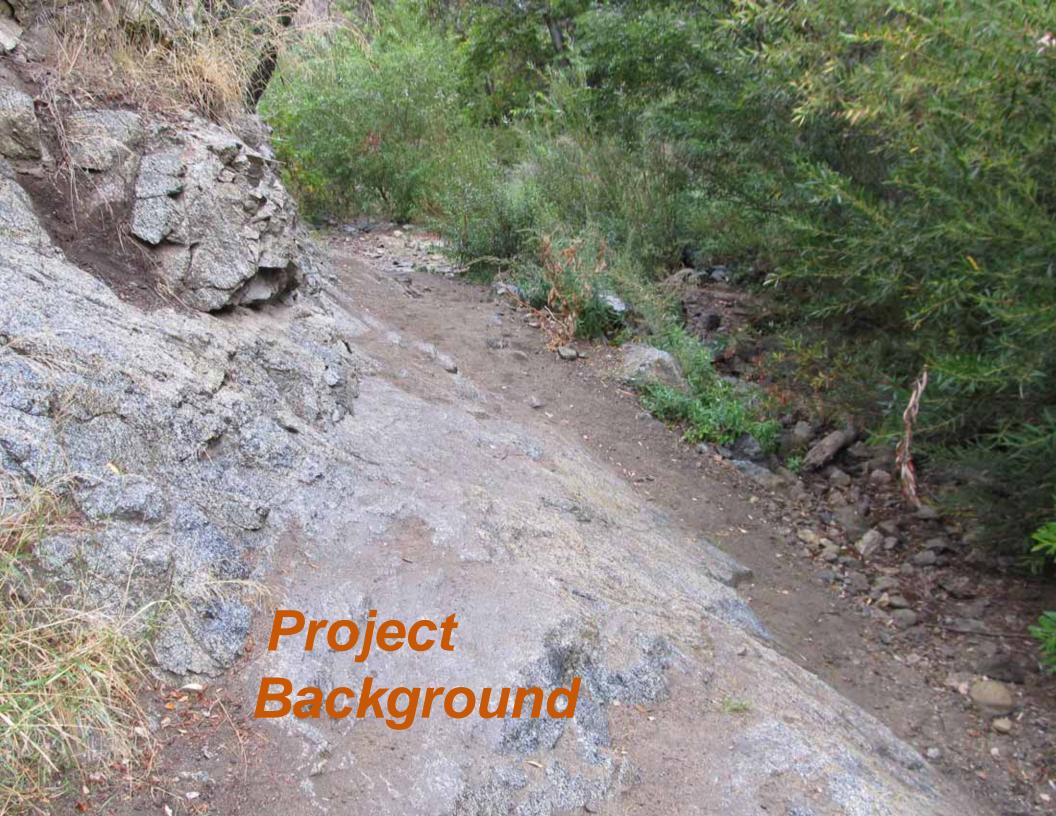
- Melissa Erikson, Senior Associate, The Planning Center | DC&E
- Isby Fleischmann, Associate, The Planning Center | DC&E

Agenda: Trail Assessment

- Introductions
- Project Background
- Change in Trail Use Process Overview
 - Recommendations to County
- Comments

The Planning Center | DC&E

- Multi-disciplinary Firm
 - Landscape Architecture
 - Environmental Review
 - Urban Design
 - Comprehensive Planning
- Mission: To envision and create great places
- Offices in Berkeley, Los Angeles, Ontario, San Diego, Santa Ana, and Ventura



Project Background

Project History

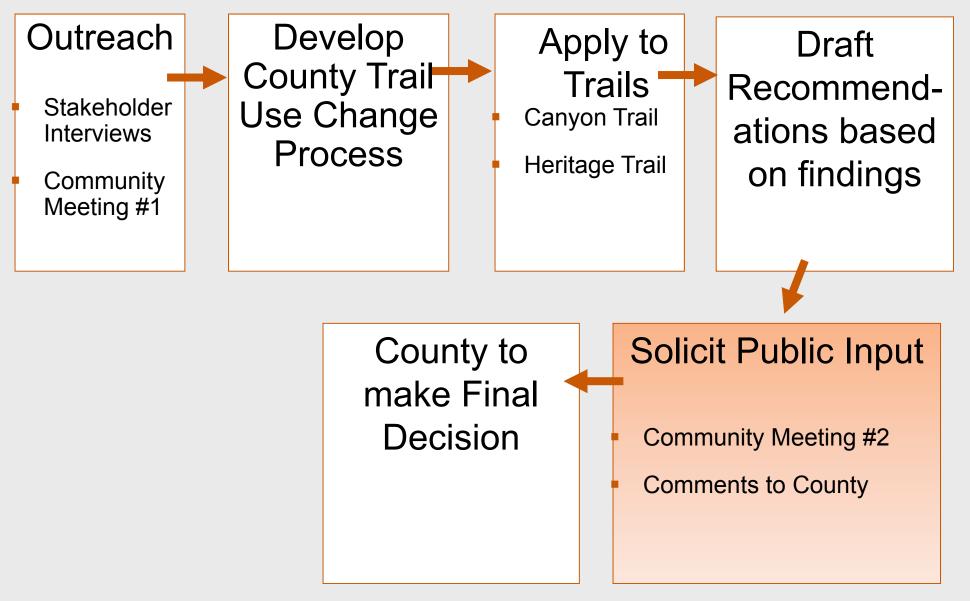


 Community concern regarding allowable uses for trails in Placerita Canyon and Vasquez Rocks Natural Areas

Purpose of Project

- Develop County Trail Use Change process
- Apply process to trails in Placerita Canyon and Vasquez Rocks Natural Areas

Project Overview- Trail Use Change



Schedule Overview

- Kick-off Meeting December 13, 2011
- State Parks Coordination (on-going)
- Stakeholder Interviews February 2012
- Community Meeting February 15, 2012
- Trail Use Change Survey March 2012
- Placerita Canyon and Vasquez Rocks Natural Areas Trail Assessment March-June 2012
- Public Notification Period June 14 July 12
- Draft Recommendations Community Meeting July 12, 2012
- County Determination TBD



- Purpose
 - Allow for change in uses; uses on a County trail are a policy and cannot be changed without a process
 - Ensure that trails are reviewed consistently and objective
- Based on California State Parks Trail Use Change Survey (Assessment Tool)
 - State Parks' process is going through environmental review
 - Public Review Draft PEIR STATUS

- Process Summary
 - Assess Existing Conditions- Trail Log
 - 2. Complete Trail Use Change Survey Form
 - 3. Assess Necessary Modifications-Trail Maintenance Log
 - 4. Draft Recommendations Report
 - 5. Public Input
 - 6. Final Decision regarding allowable uses



Trail Use Change Survey (Assessment Tool)

- Survey addresses:
 - existing conditions
 - compatibility for multi-user trails
 - trail user circulation patterns
 - trail use safety
 - trail sustainability
 - natural/cultural resources
 - facility maintenance and operational costs



Sustainability

- Sustainability refers to the ability of the trail to handle use without causing impacts to resources
- Key considerations include erosion, drainage, creek crossings, sensitive resources
- All types of trail use have an impact



Entrenched Trail with Rill



Source: USFS



Trails Use Change Requested

- Canyon Trail at Placerita Rocks Natural Area
- Heritage Trail at Vasquez Rocks Natural Area

Canyon Trail

- Requested Use Change: Allow mountain bikes
- Context
 - Classified as a State Park Unit but is operated by the County
 - Managed as a Natural Area by the County



Canyon Trail: Existing Condition

- Four existing trail connections
- Adjacent open space: Forest Service, Disney property
- Allowed uses: hiking, equestrian
- Level of Use: High use, including docent-led groups
- Parking: Nature Center, off-street near Walker Ranch Staging Area, East Walker Ranch



LA County Trail Assessment

Canyon Trail: Existing Condition

- Tread: Natural, 42 to 48 inches
- Six Special Status Species with ranges bisected by trail
- Slender-horned spineflower (Dodecahema leptoceras), Palmer's grapplinghook (Harpagonella palmeri), California Orcutt grass (Orcuttia californica); Hammond's two-striped garter snake (Thamnophis hammondii), yellow warbler (Setophaga petechia), and spotted owl (Strix occidentalis occidentalis).
- Sensitive vegetation communities bisected by trail: southern riparian scrub and southern sycamore alder riparian woodland



LA County Trail Assessment

Canyon Trail: Findings

~500 cubic yards = 71 trucks with 7 cubic yard capacity

- Potential Connectivity.
 Los Pinetos Trail
- Soil and Erosion. ~500
 cubic yards of soil loss
 from the trail tread surface.
- Creek Crossings. Two creek bed crossings; a small portion of the trail occurs within the creek bed itself.





LA County Trail Assessment

Canyon Trail: Findings

- Sight distance. ≥ 3 areas need improvement
- Passing Space. Generally adequate
- Facilities and Maintenance.
 Increased use would require more maintenance and potential law enforcement.



Canyon Trail:

Potential Modifications if Bikes Allowed

- Pinch Points. Needed in three areas
- Walk Zone. A walk zone should be considered in areas used by docent groups
- Signage. Additional signage should be installed to warn trail users that the trail is heavily used by students and other docentled groups.

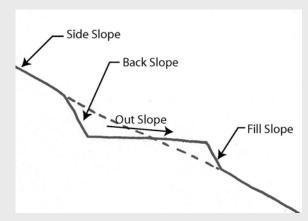


LA County Trail Assessment

Canyon Trail:

Potential Modifications for Trail Sustainability

- Reconstruct Trail- to remove berms and correct out-slope.
- Construct Turnpikes- where trail reconstruction is not adequate to address entrenchment.
- Re-route Trail- to improve sustainability, safety, and resource protection (≥ 3 reroutes)
- Reinforce Trail- to address erosion issues (1 trail segment)





Canyon Trail:

Potential Modifications for Trail Sustainability

- Armor drainage
 crossings- use rock rip
 rap at drainage crossings
 to address erosion issues
- Reconsider Creek Crossings





Canyon Trail: Additional Considerations

- Purpose of Trails (Policy consideration)
- Different Policy for Natural Areas
- State Parks Consistency
- Maintenance Thresholds
- Speed Limit

Canyon Trail: State Parks Consistency

- Placerita Canyon Natural Area is the only Natural Area that is a State Park managed by the County
- The County's operating agreement with State Parks requires that rules and regulations adopted by the County must conform to and be consistent with the rules and regulations adopted by State Parks
- State Parks typically allows mountain biking on their trails

Canyon Trail

- Draft Recommendation: Contingent on the addition of pinch points, signage, erosion control measures, and other improvements, allow mountain bikes on Canyon Trail.
- Final decision rests with the County, taking into consideration this recommendation, public input, staffing availability, budget constraints, project prioritization, and environmental constraints.

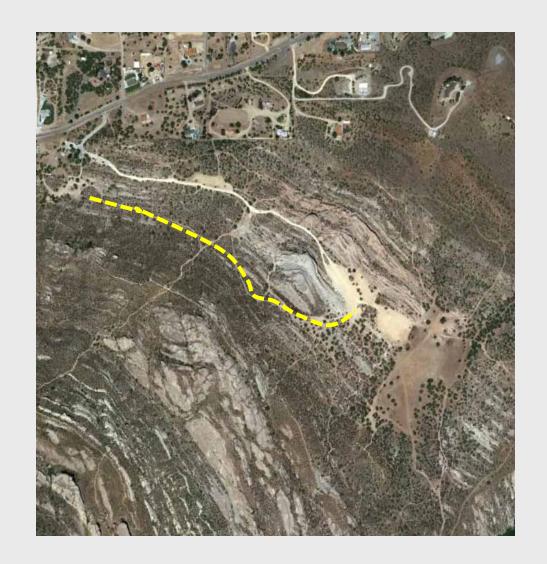
Canyon Trail: County Next Steps if Change Approved

- Review the needed improvements
- Determine costs and funding for the needed improvements
- Prioritize those needed for safety
- Evaluate phasing of improvements and implementation process



Heritage Trail

- Proposed Use Change: Allow mountain bikes
- Context
 - Managed as a Natural Area by the County
 - The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) is a federal trail that runs through Vasquez Rocks.
 Allowable uses for the PCT are determined at federal level.



Heritage Trail: Existing Condition

- Trail connections: PCT, informal trails
- No adjacent open space
- Allowed uses: hiking, equestrian
- Level of Use: High
- Parking: Two locations
- Tread: Typically 6' wide; up to 20'







LA County Trail Assessment

Heritage Trail: Existing Condition

 19 special status species with ranges bisected by trail; no sensitive vegetative communities:

Prairie falcon (Falco mexicanus); slender Mariposa-lily (Calochortus clavatus var. gracilis), Perison's morning glory, Swainson's hawk (Buteo swainsoni), southwestern pond turtle (Clemmys marmorata pallida), San Diego horned lizard (Phrynosoma blainvillii), San Bernardino ringneck snake (Diadophis punctatus modestus), twostriped garter snake (Thamnophis hammondii), black-shouldered kite (Elanus axillaris), northern harrier (Circus cyaneus), sharp-shinned hawk (Accipiter striatus), Cooper's hawk (Accipiter cooperii), golden eagle (Aquila chrysaetos), burrowing owl (historic - Athene cunicularia), loggerhead shrike (Lanius Iudovicianus), yellow warbler (Setophaga petechia), western mastiff bat (Eumops perotis), American badger (Taxidea taxus)





LA County Trail Assessment

Heritage Trail: Key Findings

- Connectivity: No connection to other trails that allow bikes; potential impact to PCT (no bikes)
- Soil and Erosion: ~98 cubic yards of soil loss from the trail tread surface.
- Cultural Resources: Significant resource
- Site Distance and Passing Space: Adequate with trimming
- Facilities and Maintenance: Increased used may require additional maintenance and law enforcement

Heritage Trail: Modifications for Trail Sustainability

- Revegetate to address social trails
- Relocate and add new signage
- Re-route trail (one location)
- Armor drainage crossings (two locations)
- Consider Walk Zone





Heritage Trail

- Draft Recommendation: Do not allow mountain bikes on the Heritage Trail for the following reasons:
 - Connectivity: Alternative connection between parking areas exists; there are no trails or connections to trails where mountain biking is allowed
 - Cultural Resources: High potential for resources to be impacted by additional trail use and needed modifications.
 - Sustainability: Existing trail use and social trails have impacted surrounding vegetation
- The final decision rests with the County.

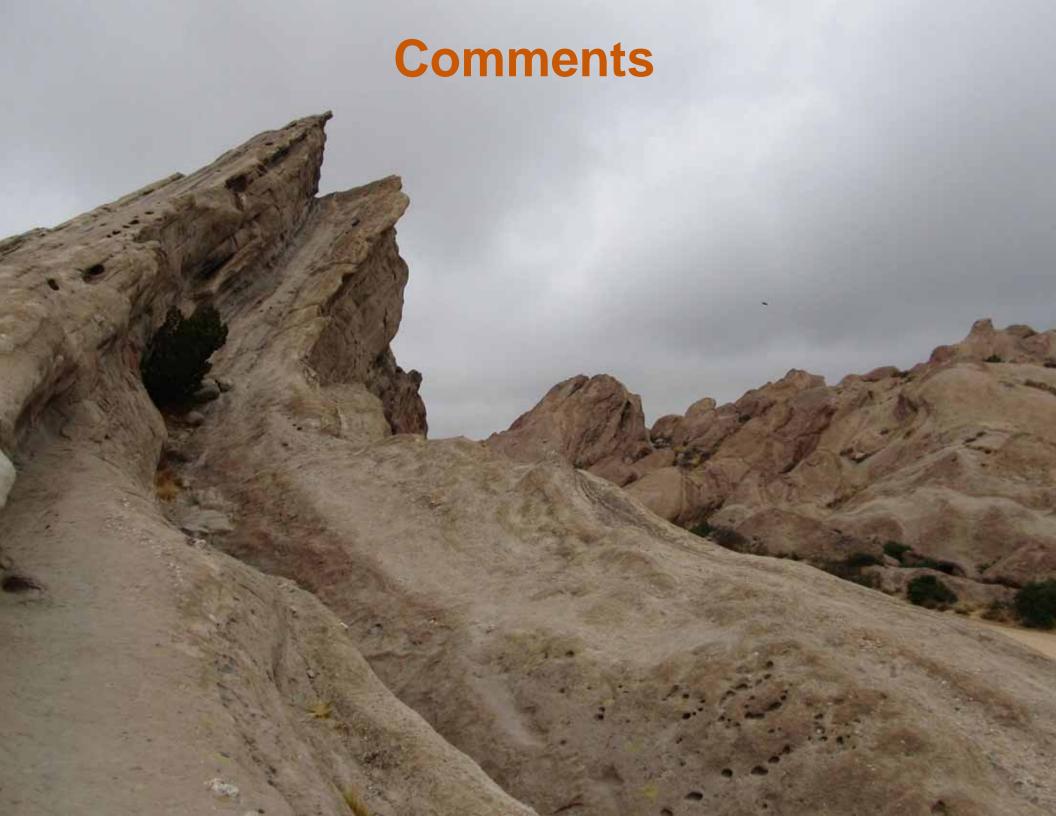
Heritage Trail: County Next Steps

- Review the needed improvements
- Determine costs and funding for the needed improvements
- Prioritize those needed for safety
- Evaluate phasing of improvements and implementation process



Draft Recommendations

- Available online at <u>www.parks.lacounty.gov</u>
- Additional comments to Lorrie Bradley at lbradley@parks.lacounty.gov
- All comments must be received by 5pm July 19, 2012













Los Angeles County Trail Assessment Community Meeting July 12, 2012

Commenting Process

- 10 comment stations in the back patio
- Visit any station to have your comments recorded for the County
- Comment cards also available at entry doors and back patio if you want to provide written comments
- Comments may be emailed to <u>lbradley@parks.lacounty.gov</u>
- If no comments, there is a contact list so you can be added to email news about the project